

# Magazine Feature Section

## The FIRST AMERICAN GIRL To BE PRESENTED AT COURT



Indian Girl Who Saved  
Life of Capt. John  
Smith and Who Later  
Was Captured by  
English, Eventually  
Was Presented to  
King and Queen of  
England.



ABOVE Pocahontas receiving a doll from Capt. John Smith. Drawing of Powhatan and portrait of Pocahontas. Below from left to right, Lady Peek, Lady Hope-Nelson and Ava Willing Astor.

One of the duties of the American ambassador to London of these days is to present American girls at court. One of the duties of the King of England and of the Queen for that matter, is to stand at one end of a hall while the Ambassador brings in the daughters of the wealth and influential Americans and introduces them to the highest officials of the British Empire.

The King of England does not make a practice of walking back and forth among his people shaking hands right and left with all comers who crave the honor and the fame it will afford. Unlike the President of the United States who does not need to know the name of the man he shakes hands with their majesties bow only to those who have been presented.

It is said of King George that he likes American women right well. He has gone out of his way to pay attentions to the wife of James Hope-Nelson, who was Isabelle Valle. He has bowed most graciously to Lady Wilfrid Peel, who was Edwina Thorburn. The queen, however, bows only haughtily at these American upstarts. The crop of American girls presented at English court has grown rapidly or recent years. Among the most favored of pure American women without a foreign title in recent years was Ava Willing Astor, whose regal appearance had all the court attaches gaping.

But history shows these present day social aspirants are only followers of a dusky Indian maid, for the first American girl to be presented at English court was Pocahontas of Virginia.

If accounts are to be believed Pocahontas was a favorite at the English court. She was not well liked by James, the king, but was liked by his queen. Pocahontas, of course, was a princess, daughter of the great Chief Powhatan, ruler of Virginia before the days of the white man. This Indian maid was born in 1594, as near as can be ascertained. She was agile and fond of sports, and there is reason to believe Powhatan was proud of the beauty of his eldest daughter. In spite of her dusky beauty she never would have been known to fame had it not been for the English explorer and colonizer, Capt. John Smith. Smith met the girl soon after he founded his colony at Jamestown in 1607. While making an exploration inland with three other men his party was surprised by the Indians. All were killed with arrows in their backs as they sat around their camp fire.

Smith at the time was away from camp hunting. The first he knew he was shot at from ambush. An Indian guide was with Smith. Lashing his left wrist to the right wrist of the Indian, Smith ran for his life. He compelled the guide to stand between him and the pursuers and thus kept them from shooting. At the same time Smith would stop at intervals and fire at the Indians. His aim was so unerring that he killed three Indians before he himself was cornered in a bend of the James River and captured. He wandered too near to the river and his feet sank in the quicksands.

The Indians pulled Smith out of the mud and took him to the fire where his companions had been killed. The Indians chafed Smith's

limbs, which had been benumbed by the quicksands and soon had him restored to strength.

### LIFE SAVED BY INDIAN GIRL

The Indians evidently had planned to torture Smith to death. He divined their thoughts and demanded that their chief be brought before him. The chief of the band was Opechancanough, a brother of the great chief Powhatan. When Opechancanough appeared Smith drew a compass from his pocket and showed how it pointed north, no matter which way it was turned. He gave these Indians the first lecture on science. They understood little of what he said but they were impressed by the compass and finally took the captain before Powhatan.

A council was called and Smith was sentenced to die. In the mean time he made friends with Pocahontas and other young girls and boys about the village. They were present to watch the killing. Powhatan was given the club to do the slaying. As he raised it to beat out Smith's brains Pocahontas threw herself on Smith's head. She said not a word but looked up at her father with the uplifted club. Finally the club was gently lowered and Powhatan looked at the chiefs in council.

Their eyes showed they wished the girl's wish be granted. Smith was given the liberty of the camp, but not released. The Indians planned a raid on Jamestown. With Smith a prisoner they believed they could conquer the settlers in it. He knew enough of the Indian language to know of their plans and advised against it. He said the white men had guns which would blow a thousand men in pieces. To prove his power he offered to make marks with a pencil on a piece of bark paper and send the paper to Jamestown where he would get medicines to cure a sick Indian.

To prove his boast an Indian messenger was sent with Smith's note. Messages by writing were new to the Indians and they were terribly surprised at the captain's power. In his letter Smith told the settlers to make a show of power, such as discharging their cannon against a row of posts. The Indians came back much impressed and no attack was made on the settlement. Smith became such a favorite about camp by making curious things with his knife that Powhatan released him on request of Pocahontas. Powhatan and Smith swore eternal friendship. Soon after his release Smith returned to England. Trouble broke out between the settlers and several white men were taken prisoner.

Captain Argall, who arrived in 1612 as Smith's successor decided to capture Pocahontas and hold her as a hostage. At that time she was living on the Potomac as the guest of a chief, Japazaws. Argall sent presents to Japazaws and finally offered him a copper kettle if he would betray Pocahontas into his hands.

Japazaws wanted that copper kettle so badly that he contrived to have Pocahontas visit one of Argall's ships in company with Japazaws' squaw. The squaw begged Pocahontas to go on board with her as she was afraid to go alone. While Pocahontas was being shown around the ship she was purposely separated

from the squaw and made a prisoner. The squaw was given a signal to escape and she fled to the shore. The girl was taken to Jamestown where she was made a prisoner, but otherwise treated with every courtesy. She was given the dress of a white woman and was taught to read and write English. An effort was made to get Powhatan to release all his prisoners, surrender their muskets and also pay a tribute of grain for the freedom of his daughter. Powhatan refused to make the treaty partly because he did not trust his daughter and partly because he feared the English would not keep their word.

### POWATHAN ASKS DAUGHTER BE RELEASED FIRST.

Powhatan wanted his daughter to be released before he gave anything to the English. The English feared the treachery of the Indian chief and wanted the prisoners returned with their muskets and provisions first. Efforts to meet near Jamestown and make an exchange were futile. The Indians would not trust themselves in the vicinity of the white men's cannon and the Englishmen would not venture into the wilderness to make the exchange.

In 1613 Governor Sir Thomas Dale, governor of Virginia, took Pocahontas up the Potomac river to visit her father. They found Powhatan absent and the Indians opened fire on the boat. Dale landed and burned the Indian village. The brothers of Pocahontas finally approached the boat and visited with

their sister, but Powhatan refused to see her or talk with the white men. Historians generally agree that Powhatan never saw his daughter again and he never was on friendly terms with the white men.

When taken prisoner to Jamestown Pocahontas inquired for Capt. John Smith in hopes he would release her. She was told Smith had been killed. It is believed the Indian girl had a romantic affection for the daring white captain, but Indian like she was too proud to show it. Eventually young Englishmen in the colony fell in love with her. One of these young men was John Rolfe, a gentleman. She returned to see her or talk with the white men. In the mean time she had been converted to Christianity and had adopted the English name of Rebecca. An appeal was made by Rolfe to Governor Dale to sanction the marriage. He gave his consent and Rolfe and Pocahontas were married in April, 1613, at Jamestown.

As far as is known the marriage was a happy one. The bride never repented her act and never wanted to return to her savage brothers. In 1616 Mr. and Mrs. Rolfe left for a visit in England. There the girl was a great favorite. She was able to talk English with readiness and she attracted all by her simplicity and unaffected grace. Among those to receive her with open arms were Lord and Lady Delaware. Although Rolfe was low in rank, Pocahontas was a princess by birth. Her acceptance by Lord and Lady Dela-

ware gave her an entry into the best London society and of course Rolfe was accepted, too.

While some historians say it was Capt. John Smith who introduced Pocahontas in court records show that statement is an error. Pocahontas had been in England several months before Smith knew of her being there. It is not likely that Lord Delaware delayed presenting the American princess in court. James I. was a silly king. He was horrified to learn such a common man as Rolfe had presumed to marry a princess. He also was horrified at a princess who would marry a common man.

Pocahontas never was a favorite with King James I., although the queen bestowed favors on the Virginia girl. It is supposed Smith had much to do with the girl's advance in favor in the eyes of the queen. Yet Smith was rather cold toward the princess when he met her in Plymouth. Pocahontas had not inquired for Smith upon her arrival in England for the simple reason she believed him dead. When he came to call on her several months after, she was overjoyed and running to him threw her arms about him and embraced him.

### POCAHONTAS REPROVES SMITH FOR COLD RECEPTION.

Smith did not make a great show of joy. He had intended that his call be merely a formal one. He did not expect that the 13-year-old girl who had saved his life would have more than a small interest in him. He was visibly embarrassed and told Pocahontas that as she was the daughter of a chief it was unbecoming for him, a common soldier to

appear on too great terms of friendship. He told her quietly that King James would never approve of her friendly act, if he heard about it. Pocahontas then rebuked Smith soundly.

"You are not afraid to come into my country and strike fear into the hearts of all, including my father," she said. "Here you seem to be afraid to recognize me as a friend."

Smith called on Pocahontas several times and even wrote a note to the queen. The note is still on the official records of London. In part it follows:

"If ingratitude be a deadly poison to all honest virtues, I must be guilty of that crime if I should omit any means to be thankful. So it was that about ten years ago, being in Virginia, and taken prisoner by the power of Powhatan, their chief king, I received especially from his son Nantaquas, the meekest, comeliest, boldest spirit I ever saw in a savage, and his sister Pocahontas, the king's most dear and well beloved daughter being but a child of 13 years, whose compassionate, pitiful heart of my desperate estate gave me much cause to respect her."

weakness of this poor commonwealth, as, had not the savages fed us, we directly had starved; and this relief, most gracious queen, was commonly brought us by the lady Pocahontas. When fortune turned our peace to war and her father, with the utmost of his policy and power sought to surprise me, having eighteen with me, the dark night could not afford her coming through the irksome woods, and with watered eyes, gave me intelligence, with her best advice to escape his fury, what had he seen, he had surely slain her."

"As yet I never begged anything of the state, and it is my want of ability, and her exceeding deserts, your birth, means and authority, her birth, virtue, want and simplicity, doth make me thus bold, humbly to beseech your majesty to take this knowledge of her, though it be from one so unworthy to be the reporter as myself, her husband's estate not being able to make her fit to attend your majesty."

While the queen granted Pocahontas some favors, the stingy King James would not permit of any generosity.

A year after her arrival in England Pocahontas prepared to embark for America, but she fell sick on the day of sailing and died at Gravesend. Her infant son, Thomas Rolfe, was left at Plymouth with Sir Lewis Stoughton, who educated the lad. Upon becoming of age Thomas Rolfe returned to the land of his mother and his descendants form a numerous progeny.